

Statements from a Facebook Australia spokesperson

Question from 7.30: Former ambassador Bleich has told 7.30 he does not recall any discussions with Facebook, and would not have said that Australia fails to understand the meets of tech companies. Does Facebook consider the email discussion set out below as an accurate representation of its engagement with the US ambassador and with Australian government representatives?

“Like the other documents that were cherry picked and released in violation of a court order last year, these documents by design tell one side of a story and omit important context. As we’ve said, these selective leaks came from a lawsuit where Six4Three, the creators of an app known as Pikinis, hoped to force Facebook to share information on friends of the app’s users. These documents have been sealed by a Californian court so we’re not able to discuss them in detail.

“We proactively meet with a range of stakeholders — from governments and experts to non-profit organisations — to help them understand how our platforms operate and answer any questions they may have about our services. This active, open engagement is not unique to Facebook or our operations in Australia, and we will continue to do more of this as we work with governments around the world on a clear framework of rules for the internet.” — Facebook Australia spokesperson

Question from 7.30: What were the particular changes to privacy law amendments that Facebook was seeking? Was Facebook seeking a wholesale exemption from Australia’s privacy regime? Would you characterise the approaches as lobbying the US ambassador? If not, can you explain how you would characterise them?

“As [Mark Zuckerberg said recently](#), new regulations around privacy are needed so that we have a standardised approach across the internet and private companies aren’t making important decisions alone. New rules for the internet should protect society from broader harms while also supporting innovation and the digital economy. We [support economy-wide regulation](#) to strengthen privacy protection for consumers across all industries if a review of Australia’s existing laws finds that they are not fit-for-purpose in our increasingly digitised economy and society. These are complex issues to get right and we look forward to working with world leaders, Governments and industry on a clear framework of rules to help achieve this.” — Facebook Australia spokesperson

Question from 7.30: The email exchange set out below indicates that Facebook objects to government regulation - what is Facebook’s position on regulation by the Australian government and governments around the world?

“The internet has transformed how billions of people live, work and connect with each other. As [Mark Zuckerberg said recently](#), new regulations are needed so that we have a standardised approach across the internet and private companies aren’t making important decisions alone. New rules for the internet should protect society from broader harms while also supporting innovation and the digital economy. These are complex issues to get right and we look forward to working with world leaders, Governments and industry on a clear framework of rules to help achieve this.” — Facebook Australia spokesperson